

LESSON TWO

Core Learning Goal: 1

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and current status of principles, institutions, and processes of political systems.

Expectation: 1

The student will demonstrate understanding of the structure and functions of government and politics in the United States.

Indicator 1.1.2

The student will evaluate how the principles of government assist or impede the functioning of government.

Assessment Limits:

- ? *Concepts: federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, representative democracy, limited government, rule of law, individual rights and responsibilities.*
- ? **Federal, state, and local government: structure, powers, concerns.**
- ? *Selection of leaders and the electoral process.*

Overview:

This lesson serves as a review of the structure and powers of the federal government. Students then examine contemporary criticisms about the federal government.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will explain the structure and powers of the federal government.
Student will assess the validity of recent criticisms of each branch of the federal government.

Materials:

Overhead transparency: ***Building a Pyramid Instructions***

1 sheet poster board per group

Old magazines to cut up

Glue and scissors

Suggested research materials:

The Readers Guide to Periodical Literature

magazines or an online research service such as www.proquest.com

SIRS on CD-ROM or online at www.sirs.com

Procedures:

1. Have pairs of students exchange opinions on the federal government and list any criticisms they have heard. Explain that today they will examine problems about each branch of the federal government.
2. Divide students into groups of four. Give each group a sheet of poster board, some old magazines, glue, and scissors. Instruct students to fold the poster board as shown on a transparency of the pyramid diagram. Before gluing it together, tell students they are to label each side with one branch of the government: Executive, Legislative, Judicial. Instruct students to find pictures in the magazines related to the duties of each branch. Have students present their pyramids and summarize the powers of the three branches on the chalkboard/overhead.
3. Using the summary list, have students brainstorm a list of criticisms of our federal government and categorize them by branches.
Criticisms/problems may include:

| | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| pork barrel | unethical behavior | abuse of executive orders |
| welfare abuse | judicial activism | lack of law enforcement |
| taxes | balancing the budget | social security funding |
| education | immigration policy | growth of bureaucracy |
4. Have students choose one problem to research. Students should research both the criticism and what is being done about it.
5. Debrief by having students report on what they learned through their research. Ask students the following summary questions:
Are these problems currently being addressed by the government?
How might this impact you in the future?
Have students write editorial letters to the local newspaper explaining one of their criticisms.

Assessment of Indicator:

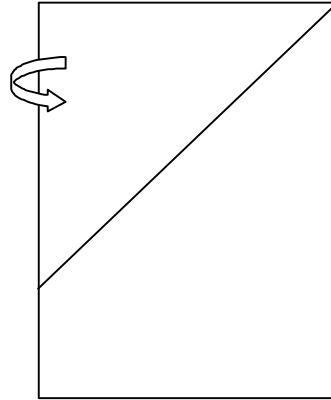
Have students answer this Extended Constructed Response item:

- ✍ Describe problems that the federal government is currently facing.
- ✍ Which problem is most critical? Explain.
- ✍ What will be the consequences of not solving the problem? Explain.
- ✍ Include examples and details to support your answer.

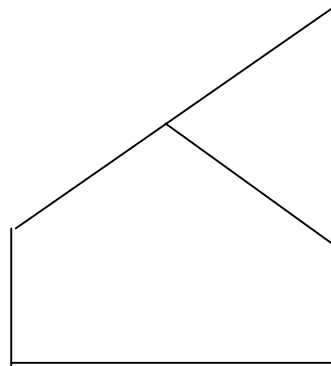
Use the Social Studies Rubric to score student responses.

Building a Pyramid Instructions

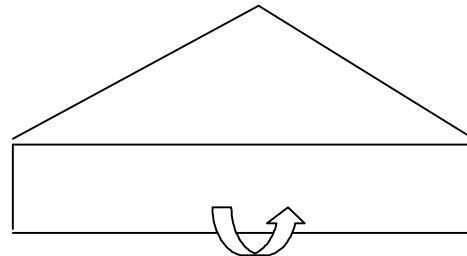
1. Fold the top left corner of the poster board diagonally so the top edge of the paper is flush with the right edge of the paper.



2. Fold the top right corner so it touches the lower point of the last fold.



3. Fold the panel at the bottom to make a horizontal crease along the edge.



4. Open the paper up and cut along the lower left diagonal crease to the center of the paper.
5. Pull point A over to point B so that the piece you cut is flush with the lower right diagonal crease. Glue the base into place.

